

Downham Rural District.

ANNUAL REPORT

OF THE

Medical Officer of Health

FOR THE

YEAR 1948.

DR. C. T. DARWENT, L.R.C.P., L.R.C.S., D.P.H.

Downham Rural District Council.

Members of the Public Health Committee.

Chairman—Major J. H. L. Luddington

Mr. W. Addison	Mr. H. Gates
„ E. Barker	Col. E. R. Herbert
„ W. H. Bentley	Mr. R. H. G. Hoff
„ W. A. Buckenham	„ H. J. Martin
„ R. D. Carter	Col. E. R. Pratt
„ R. A. Clayton	Mr. M. Stocks
„ A. P. Deck	„ C. W. Thornhill
„ A. Dye	„ G. G. Wright

The Chairman and Vice-Chairman of the Council are ex-officio members of the Committee.

Public Health Officers of the Local Authority.

MEDICAL OFFICER OF HEALTH.

Dr. C. T. Darwent, L.R.C.P., L.R.C.S., D.P.H.

Also holds the appointments of:—

Asst. County Medical Officer of Health.

Asst. County School Medical Officer.

Medical Officer of Health to Marshland Rural District.

Medical Officer of Health to Downham Urban District.

SANITARY INSPECTOR.

H. W. Nowell, Assoc. M.C.T., M.S.I.A.

CLERK TO THE HEALTH DEPARTMENT.

K. Saint.

STOKE FERRY,

June, 1949.

To:—

The Chairman and Members of the Rural District Council of Downham.

Mr. Chairman and Gentlemen,

I have the honour to present for your consideration the Annual Report of the health and sanitary circumstances of the district for the year ending the 31st December, 1948.

The Report is drawn up on the lines suggested in the various circulars issued by the Ministry of Health.

The vital statistics for the year under review may be regarded as satisfactory, although the number of live births (398) shows a decrease of 37 over the previous year — the number of deaths (217) for the same period is also decreased by 50 — thus leaving a credit balance.

The zymotic diseases for the year continue at a low level, with the exception of Whooping Cough (156) which shows an increase of 90 cases over the preceding year.

The coming into force of the National Health Insurance Act, 1946, with effect from the 5th July, 1948, has resulted in certain functions, viz., Diphtheria Immunisation, being transferred to the Norfolk County Council.

To implement the various sections of the Health Service Act, a County Council Local Health Office has been established at Downham Market, to embrace the areas of Downham Rural District; Marshland Rural District and Downham Urban. A County Local Health Sub-Committee, composed of members of the above Councils, selected members of the County Council, and members from the professional and voluntary bodies has been formed. The Town Hall, Downham Market, is the selected meeting place of this Committee.

In accordance with the terms of the Ministry of Health Circular No. 140/48, copies of Notifications of Infectious Disease are forwarded by the District Councils to the Local Health Office, and as a result, all fees paid by the District Councils to the General Practitioners are reimbursed by the County Council.

I wish to acknowledge with thanks the assistance afforded me by the officers of my department.

I have the honour to be,

Your obedient Servant,

C. T. DARWENT,

Medical Officer of Health

SUMMARY OF VITAL STATISTICS, 1948.

Area (in acres) ....	....	....	....	....	....	124,152
Population 1931 Census	15,503	....	....	1948	....	21,170
Number of separate dwellings occupied	1948	....	....	....	....	6,726
Rateable Value, 1948	....	....	....	....	....	£64,303
Product of a Penny Rate, 1948	....	....	....	....	....	£264/17/4

LIVE BIRTHS.

	Total	Male	Female	Downham Rural Dist. & Wales	Rate England & Wales	Administrative County
Legitimate	378	183	195			
Illegitimate	20	9	11			
	<hr/>	<hr/>	<hr/>			
	398	192	206	18.8	17.9	17.4

STILL-BIRTHS (Rate per 1000 (Live and Still) Births).

	Total	Male	Female	D.R.D.	Rate	Ad. County
Legitimate	7	3	4			
Illegitimate	1	0	1			
	<hr/>	<hr/>	<hr/>			
	8	3	5	19.7		24.6

DEATHS (all causes).

Total	Male	Female	D.R.D.	Rate	E. & W.	Ad. County
217	123	94	10.2		10.8	11.2

DEATHS from Puerperal Causes.

Puerperal and post-Abortive Sepsis	....	....	....	Nil.
Other Puerperal causes....	....	....	....	Nil

INFANT MORTALITY (rate per 1000 live births.

	Total	Male	Female	D.R.D.	Rate	E. & W.	Ad. County
Legitimate	10	6	4				
Illegitimate	Nil.	—	—				
	<hr/>	<hr/>	<hr/>				
	10	6	4	25.1		34.0	31.6

DEATHS FROM

Cancer (all ages) ....	....	....	....	....	....	....	27
Measles ....	....	....	....	....	....	....	Nil.
Whooping Cough ....	....	....	....	....	....	....	Nil.
Diarrhoea (under 2 years of age)	....	....	....	....	....	....	Nil.

SECTION A.

Natural and Social Conditions.

Area (acres) ....	....	....	....	....	....	124,152
Population. The estimated mid-year population of the dis-	....	....	....	....	....	21,170
trict (Registrar-General figures)	....	....	....	....	....

DEATHS.	The total number of deaths assigned to the district by the Registrar-General after adjustment for inward and outward transfers, was 217, compared with 267 for 1947. The recorded death rate is equivalent to 10.2 of the civilian population, as compared with 10.8 for England and Wales.
BIRTHS.	The number of live births assigned to the district was 398, compared with 435 in 1947. The birth rate is decreased, and is equal to 18.8 per 1,000 of the population.
MATERNAL MORTALITY.	It is satisfactory to note that there were no Maternal deaths.
STILL BIRTHS.	The number of still-births registered was 8 as compared with 13 for 1947. This gives a rate of 19.7 per 1,000 total (live and still) births.
INFANT MORTALITY.	Ten (10 legitimate) infants under 1-year of age died during 1948. Deaths under 1-year per 1,000 live births: Downham Rural District 25.1 Administrative County ... 31.6
NEONATAL MORTALITY.	Infants who died within 28 days of independant existence are classified as Neonatal deaths and as such are included in the Infant Mortality Rate.

SECTION B.

General Provision of Health Services.

LABORATORY FACILITIES.

Emergency samples of water and food for bacteriological examination are sent to the Emergency Public Health Laboratory, Norwich.

The Public Analyst is W. Lincolne Sutton, Esq., F.R.I.C., Norwich.

DIPHTHERIA ANTITOXIN.

A supply of Antitoxin in accordance with the provisions of the Diphtheria (outside London) Order, 1910, is available free of charge to Medical Practitioners for use in the District, to be had from Messrs. Smith & Wesley, Chemists, Downham Market, up to July 5th, and afterwards from the Area Health Office.

AMBULANCE FACILITIES.

Non-Infectious and accident cases are removed by the British Red Cross Ambulance Brigade stationed in Downham Market. The total number of cases dealt with by the British Red Cross Society's Ambulance was 272 for the year 1948.

Cases of Infectious Diseases are removed by the Ambulance from East Dereham Isolation Hospital.

HOSPITALS.

The three main Hospitals serving the area are:—

- (a) The West Norfolk and King's Lynn General Hospital.
- (b) The Downham Public Assistance Institution.
- (c) Addenbrooke's Hospital, Cambridge.

HOSPITAL ACCOMMODATION FOR INFECTIOUS DISEASES:—

This is provided by the East Dereham Isolation Hospital under the authority of the Norfolk County Health Authority.

EMERGENCY MATERNITY HOSPITAL at Stow Bardolph under the Norfolk County Health Authority.

SECTION C.

Sanitary Circumstances of the District.

WATER SUPPLY.

The Water supply of the Rural District is obtained from three sources:—

- (1) The Northern area is supplied by mains from the Wisbech Water Company's Works, Marham.
- (2) The Central and South Eastern area by mains from the Council's pumping station at Feltwell.
- (3) The South Western area is supplied from a main belonging to the Ely Rural District Council, water being pumped into a Water Tower at Welney.

The Council's Consulting Engineers have drawn up a scheme for the extension of mains throughout the Council's area, which has been submitted to the Ministry of Health for approval.

BACTERIOLOGICAL EXAMINATION OF WATER.

The quality of the Council's mains supply from Denton Lodge Pumping Station at Feltwell must be assumed to be satisfactory as no adverse report from the Water Engineer has ever been submitted to the Health Department.

Officers of the Health Department have submitted samples of water from the undermentioned sources for bacteriological examination to the Emergency Public Health Laboratory, Bowthorpe Road, Norwich:

Source of Samples.					Results.		
Wells							
Public	Private	R.D.C. Mains	River	Good	Suspicious	Bad	
3	20	6	1	11	1	18	

SEWAGE DISPOSAL.

The Council operates a mechanical cesspool emptier for the emptying of private cesspools, and for the collection of pail closet contents in some parishes.

During the year, 246 cesspools were emptied and a weekly collection of pail closet contents made, from the parishes of Fincham, Downham West, Hilgay (including Ten Mile Bank), Denver and Feltwell. The collection from Feltwell was commenced towards the end of the year.

During the year two further sewage disposal plants were taken over from the Air Ministry at Methwold Aerodrome, in addition to the ones already in use at Bexwell Aerodrome.

These plants serve for the treatment of sewage from the dwellings on the Aerodromes and also for the treatment of cesspool and pail closet contents collected by the cesspool emptier.

CLOSET ACCOMMODATION.

Closet accommodation in your district is approximately:—

20% Water Closets

30% Privies

50% Pails

Many of the Privy Closets are insanitary, and require conversion to pails or water closets.

REFUSE COLLECTION AND DISPOSAL.

Refuse is collected from all Parishes once monthly. A more frequent collection of refuse is desirable and more vehicles should be provided for this work.

The refuse collected in this area is of a light, bulky nature, consisting largely of tins and bottles, which makes satisfactory disposal a difficult matter. The only remedy is to cart soil or similar matter to provide filling and cover.

DISINFECTION.

In all cases of Diphtheria and Scarlet Fever, disinfection of the house was carried out immediately after the removal of the patient to Hospital, or after the recovery of a patient isolated at home. Disinfections were also carried out after death, or removal of patients suffering from Phthisis. The disinfectant used was formaldehyde.

ERADICATION OF BED BUGS.

During the year two cottages were found to be infested with bed bugs, one of which was a very bad infestation.

Both were successfully treated by spraying with insecticide.

One bad case of flea infestation was similarly dealt with.

MOVEABLE DWELLINGS.

One Licence was granted during the year to station and use a moveable dwelling.

Two applications for Licences to use Caravans were refused on account of unsatisfactory conditions.

RATS AND MICE DESTRUCTION ACT, 1919, INFESTATION ORDER, 1943.

All complaints of rat and mice infestation were promptly dealt with. In localities where complaints were numerous, surveys were made and block control methods adopted. The Council's refuse tips received attention as and when necessary. The Council do not employ a rodent operative, and the work is carried out by the Pests Department of the Norfolk Agricultural Executive Committee.

SECTION D.

Housing.

The following table shows the provision of new houses in the district during the year.

Number of houses completed by the Council	74
Number of houses completed by private building	21
Number of conversions of aerodrome buildings to dwellings	74
Total	<hr/> 169 <hr/>

In addition to these, 74 Council houses were in course of erection at the end of the year.

As a result of official representations under the provisions of the Housing Act, 1936, four demolition orders were made, and in the case of one cottage an undertaking was accepted from the owner to make the premises fit for human habitation.

SECTION E.

Inspection and Supervision of Food.

MILK SUPPLY.

There are 287 cow-keepers and retail dairymen on the register. Six new registrations were made during the year.

There are 9 Accredited and 17 Tuberculin Tested producers of milk in the area.

The keeping quality of the milk supplied in the Council's area appeared to be fairly satisfactory.

MEAT AND FOOD INSPECTION.

The Slaughterhouses in the area were not in use this year as the slaughtering of livestock continued to be carried out at King's Lynn under the Ministry of Food's centralised Slaughtering Scheme.

Inspections of food at retail shops and canteens resulted in 4 cwts. 104 lbs. of various foods, in addition to 170 tins of food, being condemned as unfit for human consumption.

SECTION F.

Prevalence of, and Control over, Infectious and other Diseases.

SMALL POX. Nil.

SCARLET FEVER. Five cases were notified during the year — 3 were removed to Hospital.

DIPHTHERIA. One case was notified during the year.

DIPHTHERIA IMMUNISATION.

In order that the freedom from Diphtheria in the district be maintained, it is essential that the good work in the past in this field of

SECTION G.

STATISTICAL TABLES, 1948.

CAUSES OF DEATH.

Table No. 1.

Causes of Death.					Total	Male	Female
1.	Typhoid and paratyphoid fevers	....	....	....	Nil.	—	—
2.	Cerebro spinal fever	....	....	....	Nil.	—	—
3.	Scarlet fever	....	....	....	Nil.	—	—
4.	Whooping cough	....	....	....	Nil.	—	—
5.	Diphtheria	....	....	....	Nil.	—	—
6.	Tuberculosis of respiratory system	....	....	....	6	5	1
7.	Other forms of tuberculosis	....	....	....	Nil.	—	—
8.	Syphilitic diseases	....	....	....	Nil.	—	—
9.	Influenza	....	....	....	2	1	1
10.	Measles	....	....	....	Nil.	—	—
11.	Acute polio-myelitis and polio encephalitis	....	....	....	1	—	1
12.	Acute infective encephalitis	....	....	....	1	1	—
13.	Cancer of the buccal cavity & oesphagus (m)	....	....	....	4	2	2
	uterus (f)	....	....	....	—	—	—
14.	Cancer of stomach and duodenum	....	....	....	4	4	—
15.	Cancer of breast	....	....	....	1	1	—
16.	Cancer of all other sites	....	....	....	18	11	7
17.	Diabetes	....	....	....	1	1	—
18.	Intra-cranial vascular lesions	....	....	....	25	13	12
19.	Heart disease	....	....	....	85	48	37
20.	Other diseases of circulatory system	....	....	....	11	7	4
21.	Bronchitis	....	....	....	6	3	3
22.	Pneumonia	....	....	....	5	1	4
23.	Other respiratory diseases	....	....	....	3	2	1
24.	Ulcer of stomach or duodenum	....	....	....	2	1	1
25.	Diarrhoea under 2 years	....	....	....	Nil.	—	—
26.	Appendicitis	....	....	....	1	—	1
27.	Other digestive diseases	....	....	....	4	1	3
28.	Nephritis	....	....	....	4	3	1
29.	Puerperal and post abortive sepsis	....	....	....	Nil.	—	—
30.	Other maternal causes	....	....	....	Nil.	—	—
31.	Premature birth	....	....	....	3	2	1
32.	Congenital malformations, birth injury and infantile diseases	....	....	....	3	3	—
33.	Suicide	....	....	....	1	1	—
34.	Road traffic accidents	....	....	....	2	2	—
35.	Other violent causes	....	....	....	2	—	2
36.	All other causes	....	....	....	22	10	12
All causes					217	123	94

SECTION H.

Table No. 2.

Causes of Death of Children under One Year, 1948.

CAUSES OF DEATH,	AGE IN WEEKS					Total
	1	2	3	4	5-52	
I. Congenital Malformations						
II. Diseases of Early Infancy :						
(a) Congenital Debility	1	1			1	3
(b) Premature Birth	3					3
(c) Injury at Birth						
(d) Atelectasis						
(e) Others						
III. Diseases of Respiratory System				1	2	3
IV. Diseases of Nervous System						
V. Diseases of Digestive System					1	1
VI. Tuberculosis Disease						
VII. Infectious Disease						
VIII. Syphilis						
IX. Overlaying						
X. Violence						
XI. All other causes						
	4	1	—	1	4	10

Table No. 3.

New Cases of and Deaths from Tuberculosis, 1948.

Age — in years	NEW CASES.				DEATHS.			
	Respiratory Male	Respiratory Female	Non-Respiratory Male	Non-Respiratory Female	Respiratory Male	Respiratory Female	Non-Respiratory Male	Non-Respiratory Female
0								
1								
5	1			1				
15	1		1					
25	3	2			2			
35	2							
45	1				3			
55	1							
65						1		
65+		1						
Totals	9	3	1	1	5	1	—	—

NOTIFIABLE INFECTIOUS DISEASES. TABLE NO. 4.
NOTIFICATION IN AGE GROUPS.

DISEASE.	Under 1 year													Total	Hospital	Deaths
	1	year	1+	2+	3+	4+	5+	10+	15+	20+	35+	45+	65 and over			
Scarlet Fever	—	—	1	—	—	3	1	—	—	—	—	5	3	—
Diphtheria....	—	—	—	—	—	—	1	—	—	—	—	—	1	—
Measles	3	8	9	10	7	37	11	3	1	—	—	92	—	—
Whooping Cough	9	12	24	18	25	63	3	2	—	—	—	156	—	—
Erysipelas	—	1	1	—	—	1	—	1	—	—	1	5	—	—
Pneumonia	2	—	—	1	—	3	1	2	2	5	3	21	—	5
Puerperal Pyrexia	—	—	—	—	—	—	1	—	1	—	—	2	—	—
Infective Jaundice	—	—	—	—	—	—	1	2	—	—	—	3	1	—
Acute Polio Myelitis	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	1	—	—	—	1	1	—
Dysentery	—	—	—	—	—	—	1	—	—	—	—	1	—	—
Totals	14	21	35	29	32	107	16	11	9	4	5	4	287	6	5	

TABLE NO. 5.
MONTHLY INCIDENT OF NOTIFIABLE DISEASES. 1947-8.
(Other than Tuberculosis).

DISEASE.	Jan- uary	Feb- ruary	March	April	May	June	July	August	Sept- ember	Octo- ber	Nov- ember	Dec- ember	Total
Scarlet Fever	—	—	3	—	1	—	—	—	—	1	—	—	5
Diphtheria....	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	1	1
Measles	1	2	44	13	4	4	—	8	5	7	2	2	92
Whooping Cough	10	2	16	15	17	37	15	17	15	4	3	5	156
Erysipelas	1	—	2	—	—	—	—	1	—	1	—	—	5
Pneumonia	6	2	2	2	1	1	4	—	—	2	—	1	21
Puerperal Pyrexia	—	—	—	1	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	1	2
Infective Jaundice	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	1	—	—	1	1	3
Acute Polio-Myelitis	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	1	1
Dysentery	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	1	1
Totals	18	6	67	31	23	42	19	27	20	15	6	13	287

